



Region 2
3201 Spurgin Road
Missoula, MT 59804

August 26, 2016

Dear Interested Citizen:

Thank you for your consideration and/or comments on a proposal by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) to enter into a renewable five-year lease with private landowner Monroe Property Company, to continue public use of the Roundup and Three Stall fishing access sites on the Blackfoot River.

Enclosed is a decision document in which FWP explains its rationale for choosing the Proposed Action alternative. Upon completion of the public involvement process and by inclusion of this Decision Notice, FWP accepts the draft environmental assessment (EA) as final.

FWP will request approval of this fishing access site lease from the Fish & Wildlife Commission at its regularly scheduled meeting on October 13, 2016 (currently scheduled for Forsyth, MT). This meeting is open to the public, as are other regularly scheduled Commission meetings.

Please feel free to contact me at 406-542-5500 with any questions you may have. Thank you for your interest and participation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randy Arnold". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Randy" and last name "Arnold" clearly distinguishable.

Randy Arnold
Regional Supervisor

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Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

DECISION NOTICE: Fishing Access Site Lease for the Roundup and Three Stall Sites, Blackfoot River

*Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Region 2 Office
3201 Spurgin Road, Missoula, MT 59804
Phone 406-542-5500*

August 2016

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED PROJECT

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) plays a key role in administering recreational use of the Blackfoot River, and the Roundup and Three Stall fishing access sites have long been part of this network. These access points serve recreationists in the popular Clearwater Junction-Greenough reach of the river located in Missoula County. These two sites have traditionally been provided by a private landowner in an informal agreement with FWP. A signed lease for these two access points would be in the best interests of the landowner, the agency, and the public.

Alternative: Proposed Action

Both the Roundup and Three Stall fishing access sites have been in operation at their existing locations for approximately 20 years. The proposed action would continue this operation, placing it under the auspices of a written, 5-year renewable lease agreement between FWP and the private landowner (Monroe Property Company). This lease would enable public use of the Roundup and Three Stall fishing access sites to continue. The landowner would provide the lease at no cost, allowing day-use river access and associated parking at both sites. FWP would provide management services characteristic of its Fishing Access Site (FAS) Program, including site maintenance, designation of vehicle parking areas, monitoring of public use, trash collection, signage, and enforcement of regulations. The lease sets an initial five-year term, and provides automatic five-year renewals unless either party gives notice that it desires to end the lease.

Alternative: No Action

No action would result in status quo, which is an informal arrangement between FWP and the private landowner. The landowner could continue to allow public river access, but would be under no obligation to do so. However, the landowner has expressed a strong desire to have a formal agreement defining roles and responsibilities for site administration and management. The no-action alternative does not meet the landowner's wishes, and thus does not offer assurance that the landowner would continue to make the Roundup and Three Stall sites available to public use.

PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS

A Draft Environmental Assessment¹ (EA) for the proposed project was made available for public review and comment for an 18-day period from July 29 through August 15, 2016. Legal notices were published

¹ Draft EA available (and accessed 12 August 2016) on FWP's website at:
http://fwp.mt.gov/news/publicNotices/environmentalAssessments/acquisitionsTradesAndLeases/pn_0189.html

once each in the *Independent Record* (Helena, July 30), *Missoulian* (July 29), and *Seeley Swan Pathfinder* (August 4) newspapers. FWP distributed 6 copies of the EA and approximately 30 email-notifications of the EA's availability to adjacent landowners and interested individuals, groups and agencies. The EA was available for public review on FWP's web site (<http://fwp.mt.gov/>), under "Recent Public Notices" beginning July 29, and comments could be made directly on the EA's webpage.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENT

FWP received 2 comments during the 18-day comment period, representing 2 people:

- *Glad that these leases are finally getting done! I don't see anything about weed spraying; will FWP be responsible for weed spraying? [Weeds are covered under "Vegetation resources," pg 5 of Draft EA.]*
- *I support the lease of these two Fishing Access Sites. I would also like to Thank the Monroe Property Company, for being so generous and sharing their land with the public!!!! Please pass my "Thanks" along to them.*

Both public comments supported the proposal, and no issues were raised that needed addressing in this Decision Notice.

DECISION

I have determined that the proposed action will not have a significant negative effect on the natural or human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

Based on the analysis in the Draft EA, along with the public comments and the applicable laws, regulations and policies, I have selected the Proposed Action and it is my recommendation to proceed with this proposed lease.

By notification of this Decision Notice, the draft EA is hereby made the final EA. The draft EA with Decision Notice may be viewed at or obtained from Region 2 Montana Fish, Wildlife & (contact information on page 1). The EA and DN are still available for review on FWP's web site (<http://fwp.mt.gov/>) under "Recent Public Notices" (enter "stall" in "Search Public Notices").

CONCLUSION

The finding of selection for the Proposed Action alternative is the product of this Decision Notice. Approval by the Fish & Wildlife Commission is required for this 5-year lease, and I am pleased to recommend to the Commission that it approve this proposed lease.



Randy Arnold
Regional Supervisor

8/26/2016

Date